THE EIGHTH DAY.

28th February 1914.

The Assembly met at 11-30 A. M. on Saturday, the 28th February 1914.

VIII.—MISCELLANEOUS.

135 The increasing poverty of the people of Travancore and the necessity for taking immediate steps towards the amelioration of their condition.

Mr. P. Padmanabhan Tampi (Member, Kalkulam taluk) dwelt at considerable length on the increasing poverty of the people of Travancore.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

136. The necessity for establishing Local Boards.

Mr. K. Raman Tampi (Member, Vilavancode taluk) said that, at present, the wants of the people were represented by means of petitions, but the officers concerned took no notice of them in many cases, and, even if they paid any attention to them, it took years for their disposal. The grievances of the public would be many and varied and the redress obtained by petitions would not be much. If Taluk Boards, similar to what obtained in the Madras Presidency, were established, the grievances of the public could be readily redressed. The Member, therefore, advocated the establishment of a Board for each taluk, consisting of not less than five members, selected from among the taluk voters for the Assembly, with the Tahsildar as the *ex-officio* President. The term of office of the members should not be less than two years. They should represent the wants of the taluk affecting not less than 100 persons and propose remedial measures for them. The Tahsildar, as the *ex-officio* President of the Board, should submit a report on the representations to the Dewan Peishkar, who should address the Government in the matter. It should also be ruled that not more than two subjects should be brought up by the Board at a time and not less than two meetings should be held in a month. The subjects, with the orders of the Government thereon, should be published in the Gazette once every year. The institution would furnish a safe and sure ground for the Government in their administration. A healthy public opinion would also be gradually created. The Member said that, if the Government had any doubt as to the feasibility of the scheme, it might be tried, as an experimental measure, in a few selected taluks, in the same way as the Town Improvement Committees.

Mr. Ramavarmar Kotharvarmar Koviladhikarikal (Member, Thiruvalla taluk) said that, apart from the several measures of reform for which the present administration would ever be remembered, one marked feature of it was the definite policy pursued in teaching the people the art of self-government. The creation of the several T. I. C's. in the interior parts of the State, with a non-official majority in them, the privilege conferred on the people to elect the non-official members in some of the Committees, the delegation of a similar power to the Assembly Members in the matter of electing the non-official members of the Legislative Council, and the action taken towards the formation of Village Panchayats, were all steps towards the attainment of the goal of constitutional Government. The formation of Local Boards he was going to ask for was very closely allied to the measures already adopted and was but a more advanced step towards local self-government. The subject of establishing Local Boards had been brought up before the Assembly on previous occasions and the reply vouchsafed by the Government in the Seventh Session was very favourable. The Government said that they recognised that local self-government might

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have to the provided in rural areas later on, and they promised to consider the matter. The Member said that the time had arrived for introducing Local Boards. He would suggest that there should be separate District Boards, Taluk Boards and Village Boards. The absence of such bodies was a serious disability at present He said also that the maintenance of village roads, lanes and water-sources' now under the Revenue department, the control over *poramboke* and waste lands, the improvement of agriculture on scientific and up-to-date lines, primary education, village sanitation and hygiene, and the working of the Village Panchayats, were some of the matters which the Boards could be safely entrusted with. If the Government approved of the above proposals, he said that he would submit a detailed scheme within a fixed time to regulate the working of the Boards.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

137. The need for concerting measures to direct commercial activities in Travancore.

Mr. T. V. Krishna Iyer (Member, Trading Classes, Nagercoil) said that over three crores of rupees' worth of articles were being annually exported from the State and a like quantity was also being imported. The Government were also spending large sums of money on the sea-ports, the benefit of which did not go to the people of the State. The people had a keen desire to attempt all industries in the State, but, for want of experience and advice, they were unable to move forward. He suggested that, if a Commercial Department was established in the State, it would prove of lasting good, in the same way as the Department of Agriculture.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

138. The necessity for allowing a permanent Member to represent the Gauda Saraswatha Brahmin s in the Assembly.

Mr. V. Kesavan Mallan (Member, Nominated) said that, in Travancore, there were over 12,000 Gauda Saraswatha Brahmins, who were living mostly in the Quilon and the Kottayam Divisions, and that they were very backward in education and civilization, and generally very poor also. They had very little chance of being elected as Members of the Assembly under the ordinary rules. He therefore requested that the community should be given the privilege of representation by a permanent Member. to be elected by the Members of the community under the presidentship of the Tahsildar of the Sherthalai taluk.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

139. A plea for a special electorate for the Eazhavas, with a view to securing adequate representation of the community in the Assembly.

Mr. K. M. Krishnan (Member, Nominated) said that the Eazhavas formed one-sixth of the total population of Travancore, and that they had, if election was allowed by communities, a claim for electing 16 out of the 100 Members of the Assembly. But, since the institution of the Assembly, only one Eazhava had been elected as a Member by the taluk voters in one year. They had thus little or no chance of being adequately represented in the Assembly under the ordinary rules. In the taluk elections, only the influential men of the place usually got elected. The lists of voters were far from correct, as many eligible Eazhavas had been omitted. He requested that the Government should insist upon the voters' lists being made quite full and accurate. It was also necessary to enforce the attendance of *all* the voters at the election meetings.

It was on a consideration of the inadequate representation of the community under the election rules that the Government had reserved six seats in the Assembly for the Eazhavas, to be filled up by nomination. The community was very grateful to the Government for the privilege. But such nominations were generally made on the

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